

Pooser for his achievements and commitments to the hotel industry in the southeastern States. I sincerely thank Mr. Pooser for his outstanding contributions, and congratulate him on becoming a recipient of the 2002 South Carolina Hospitality Leader of the Year Award, and wish him well in all of his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE AMERICAN CENTURY THEATER

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 7, 2002

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the American Century Theater, which is located in northern Virginia. Since 1995, this Arlington-based theater has been overwhelmingly successful in bringing different genres of theater to the stage, and in turn has greatly enhanced the quality of life for northern Virginians.

When the American Century Theater realized the lack of visibility American playwrights have in the Washington DC area, it strove to encourage Americans to rediscover the extraordinary vision and wisdom of our past American playwrights. Regardless of the countless masterpieces created by our country's great writers, only a handful of classics could be found in local theaters. The American Century theater recognized the lack of family-orientated shows available, and subsequently set the theater's mission to become an experience for the whole family to enjoy.

The American Century Theater focuses on plays that are at least 25 years old, under produced, and contain a variety of form and content. The plays do not contain offensive language or graphic sexual behavior, and they frequently deal with current social issues—making them suitable for the entire family. The Theater has also shown itself to be non-partisan and apolitical.

In addition to providing northern Virginia with extraordinary plays, the Theater also maintains a strong dedication to serving our community in many other ways. StageThought is a special educational program for high school students and other youth groups that provide study guides, pre- and post-show discussions, and drastically reduced group rates that enable these students to attend plays that might otherwise be outside their means.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to congratulate the American Century Theater for its continued efforts to preserve American Culture. The American Century Theater is a local treasure and should be recognized for its integrity and laudable mission. I hope all my colleagues will join me in applauding them for their hard work in bringing American heritage to the theater.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 7, 2002

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, since the first celebration of International Women's

Day on March 19, 1911, women have come to realize opportunities about which they then could only dream. And they have taken advantage of those opportunities, excelling in every field and task put before them. As the world has become more aware of the abilities and talents of women throughout the globe, we also have become more aware of the very real issue of violence against women and its devastating effects.

While our consciousness of violence against women has risen, the problem has not evaporated. There is still much work to do. Cases of violence against women continue to persist in our own nation and throughout the world. These vicious crimes often happen within the home and have devastating consequences for the victims personally, as well as for their families and for society as a whole.

We must continue to work together to empower women from an early age by teaching them that any form of abuse is unacceptable and encouraging them to speak out. We must also ensure that those who commit these heinous acts are appropriately punished for the crimes they commit.

I serve on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations where I am proud to support many foreign assistance programs that benefit women, including the microcredit program for the very poor. These program empower women by giving them the capacity to provide for themselves and become self-reliant. Economically empowering women not only reduces poverty, it also creates a sense of self-worth and importance with which women can address the many challenges they face.

Mr. Speaker, we must continue to build upon the achievements that have been made in reducing violence against women and I look forward to working with my colleagues to accomplish this goal.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 7, 2002

Mr. JEFF MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained earlier today while attending a closed hearing for Schism v. the United States in the U.S. Court of Appeals, here in Washington, DC. Being a closed hearing, I was unable to leave when this afternoon's vote was called and further, had the understanding that the vote would not occur until a time certain. I respectfully request the RECORD to reflect that, had I been here, I would have voted "yea" on S.J. Res. 32.

GENERATING OPPORTUNITIES BY FORGIVING EDUCATIONAL DEBT FOR SERVICE (GOFEDS)

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 7, 2002

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, listening to the inspiring thoughts of Darin Johnson, I can't help but reflect on the words uttered over 40 years ago by President John F. Kennedy:

"In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility—I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country, and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

There was perhaps no more eloquent a call to government service than this speech by President Kennedy. Even though our enemies may be different than they were in 1961, we are still charged with "defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger."

In the aftermath of 9-11, many Americans, like Darin Johnson, are looking for ways to serve and "make a difference" for their country. In fact, according to data collected by the Partnership for Public Service, in the three months after September 11th, the number of applications for federal jobs received by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's service centers increased by 14 percent. We need to seize this opportunity to hire a diverse group of the best and brightest women and men this country has to offer. However, we can't do this using outdated recruitment methods and incentives that penalize those who choose Federal service.

That's why we are here today. With college tuition costs spiraling, many college graduates are left with huge loans to repay following graduation. Even those who are attracted to government employment, out of necessity, gravitate toward the higher salaries of the private sector in order to repay their personal debt.

Although we are standing here on Capitol Hill, this is not just an "inside the Beltway issue." The reach of our Federal government is evident across our great nation. In Cook County, Illinois, for example, my home state, there are over 20,000 Federal employees. I am, therefore, pleased to be a cosponsor of Generating Opportunities by Forgiving Educational Debt for service (GOFEDS). Currently, when Federal agencies repay student loans for employees, these payments are taxable to the employees. However, many educational institutions have instituted similar loan repayment benefits to encourage graduates to go into government service or to work for non-profit organizations—and these payments are not taxable. This bill will erase this disparity.

However, let us not see this bill as an ending, but rather, a beginning—one in a series of initiatives we need to take to ensure that our Federal government is a model employer—we own the American people no less.

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY 2002 DEMONSTRATES REAL PROGRESS IN NORTH OF IRELAND

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 7, 2002

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, yet another glorious Saint Patrick's Day will soon be upon us, and all of the good, warm Irish people here,